Feb. 16 – 21 Cabin A-16

S.S. United States

Weather: Rough – wind – snow

2/16 – “Hollins Abroad” party in Cocktail Lounge – All Ashore at 11:30 A.M.

Past Statue of Liberty. Lunch 1:30. Movie: “I’ll Cry Tomorrow”

Dinner – Dancing with Ship’s Surgeon

The Pelham Sun - July 19, 1956

**Life in Paris and the French Scene Through the Eyes of A College Girl – A Fresh Picture**

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**Miss Emelyn Sheffield of Manor Circle, Hollins College Student**

**Spending a Year Abroad, Gives Lively Picture of the Foreign**

**Scene and French Family with Whom She is Residing.**

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Enthusiasti glimpses of the French scene, something of the beauty of Paris, the fascinating sights offered by the “fairy-land of France,” and home life in the French capital, are offered through the eyes of a Pelham Manor girl, Miss Emelyn Sheffield in a recent letter written to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mallon J. Sheffield of Manor Circle.

Miss Sheffield was one of thirty sophomore students selected last winter for study abroad on the Hollins Abroad program. In company with 29 other students from the college in Virginia, she sailed on the “Liberte” last February, to carry on her college studies at the Sorbonne for a year. After a summer of travel in England, or the continent and in Africa, she will return to her books in Paris, in October.

The nineteen-year-old student writes home graphic letters, filled with enthusiasm. A quick sympathy for people, an appreciation for the foreign scene and youthful zest for the new and different, make her messages easy and pleasant reading.

In a recent letter home, Miss Sheffield wrote in part:

**“All the People Speak French”**

“Sometimes even now, after having spent almost three and a half months here, I have to tell myself over and again that I really am in the “Fairyland” of France and that all of the many people I see every day all speak French NOT English. Getting adjusted to all of these people was, and sometimes still is, a stint calling for quick wit, open mind, tact and the universal phrase of “pardon.” I have foud that being a student in this vast city of Paris, there are many many advantages and experiences available to me and all of the other fortunate foreigners using the same opportunities.

**A Glimpse of Social Life**

“The French are always willing and glad to help anyone who is earnest and interested in them. Being a member of “Hollins Abroad” has led to several invitations to teas, soiree, introductions and gatherings where we have met some very interesting and well-reputed persons of Paris. Madame Dupuis who holds a series of parties called “Amica-America,” entertains in the true high style noted for the French and has helped us all in turn get acquainted, meet some French people, and have a sweet taste of the Paris social life.

“I shall never forget the quiet, upsurging anxiety that I, along with 29 other girls, felt as we finally spotted off in the vague and misty distance the shores of England, and finally at four a.m. rejoicing to behold the busy harbor of Le Havre, forgetting our terribly cold feet and the freezing drizzle of rain, we were busy imagining just what Paris in reality was like, how in heaven’s name , we would ever speak the strange-sounding language of French, much less understand it! What our new ‘home’ and ‘family’ would be like, if the Eiffel Tower really stood overlooking all of Paris . . . and many other question, doubts, and the unbelievable realization that we had finally, at last, reached France.

**Paris – And A New World**

**“**After spending the first confusing, bewildering night at Rouen, where there were some terribly funny faux-paxx made amid hilarious laughter and bewildered looks on the countenances of the efficient ‘garcons,’ we set out to discover our New World of Paris. Sue and I, clutching each other for dear life, stepped precariously into the shaky, noisy elevator and soon found ourselves being introduced to Madame and the children of ‘our family for a whole year ahead. We found that we live in the elite 16th district on the 6th floor of a very nice apartment. (Sometimes I’m not too sure as to how nice it is, that is, when the elevator is ‘en derangenent’ – means six flights of winding, dark stairs are to be climbed twice a day. Fortunately, this isn’t often true, but we did make a ‘hit’ with the concierge the second day we were here, as the man who brought our trunks proceeded to promptly break the contraption.)

**The French Family**

I have considered myself quite lucky being in that family that I am in. There are times when things are a little rugged because of the five children running, yelling, screaming all at the same time, but Madame soon takes the situation well in hand and succeeds in calming things down – for awhile, anyway. Each member of the family seems to be as different as night and day and sometimes rather hard to understand because of their almost completely different upbringing than ours.

**Monsieur – The ‘Silent’ Type**

“First of all there is Monsieur who hasn’t been home too much because of business trips to various parts of France and Africa. Sue has gotten to know him better than I and describes him much better than I could, as follows: “Monsieur is my love, He has that typical French reserve about him which always makes one just a little uncomfortable and thinks twice before saying things. He has a way of looking at you with his piercing eyes and makes you feel as if he’s weighing your thoughts one after another. The silent type who sits and listens at the table with his hands folded and elbows on the arms of his fauteuil, he always makes at least one well-chosen remark for which everyone waits eagerly, then jumps when he says it.”

“I can hear his ‘sage’ French voix now, saying ‘Su---e’ in his forever teasing manner, which to everyone outside would sound as if I were being severely reprimanded. He seems to be in a world apart, there is a special little air about him that one approaches yet ever breaks. Above all, however, is the everlasting twinkle in his eyes and his kind, knowing smile. There is a roundness in his cheeks that makes one think he’s always laughing, and the soft line of his eyebrows, with the dimple-like creases around a firm mouth, will never escape me.”

**Madame – Toujours Fresh as a Daisy**

“Then there is Madame, ah, Madame Dufournier, -- Toujours fresh as a daisy, young at heart, fair-haired and proper, her own history dating back to the proud royalty of Belgium. Always kind, congenial and smiling to guests, occasionally interrupting only for a second to issue a biting “giffle” to one of the misbehaving children or breaking off a sentence to scold rapidly and severely in what to me still is incomprehensible French, and then continuing on here merry way leading the conversations. Bringing up the five children has been her main occupation ever since her marriage at the age of 18 years, and, on the side she allows free time to occupy her at parties and soirees wither friends and her cousin Pierre. Quick-witted, fun loving and intelligent is she et comme heureuse je suis d’etre ici!

**Mlle. Marie-Annick and Her Suitors**

“The oldest and the only girl is the attractive Marie-Annick who is often the object of many pointed remards and, as most normal 17 year old girls, has her share of troubles with the many suitors, some of whom would be a little too old for me! If the telephone rings, one can surely wager that it is some handsome Frenchman seeking a night to show her some more of the famous Paris night life. Sometimes her soup get salty from her sad tears arising and flowing from her eyes for various reasons, either because the latest beau hasn’t phoned or because Madame didn’t approve of her last action and forbade her to “sorti” with her fiends. It’s a hard job to grow up!

**“Ask Yves” – He Always Knows!**

Yves, at the nervous age of 16, leads the conversations which interest him, patiently corrects Sue and me, and describes in brilliant detail answers to our outpouring questions. He serves as the man of the family when papa is so often away. He can argue a theory of Descartes of speak on and on on the subjects of metaphysics or of the latest football equipe. It’s often rather distracting to watch his food get cold on his plate while his interest is travelling in another direction, either in talk or deep thought, or better yet, distracting little Dominique who he tries to make yelp or cry, which generally he succeeds in. His heavy eyebrows and flying unkept hair are distinguishing traits which add to his vigor and rugged athletic appearance. If anything needs to be fixed, done or answered, one is always directed to “demandez a Yves.” He always knows.

**The “Gentleman” of the Family**

“Patrick – the gentleman of the family. The next to older boy at the odd age of 14 who sits silently at the end of the dinner table, occasionally dropping a few comments here and there, usually jumped upon immediately afterwards by Yves because Patrick just “doesn’t know.” If given a fair chance, he becomes a shining piece of charm and intelligence with a subtle touch of humor, more or less like that of his father’s. His interest faltering from the popular sports, he keeps his eyes and ears open in favor of education in the field of medicine. Differing in this way from his older brother (besides the fact that he also knows that girls exist, of which Yves seems to have no interest), Patrick is often beaten down and outshone by his domineering brother.

**Jean-Francois at the Pension**

“Next in line comes Jean-Francois, age 12. He isn’t present too often because of his enrollment in a distant “pension.” It seems that after analysis by several psychologists, it was decided that a private school would be best to detract his devoted attention from his mother. Every other weekend is looked forward to when Jean-Francois arrives to spend three days at home. Each time he greets you with his shy smile, a hinted bow and warm handshake. When the time approaches for him to gather up his belongings and head back to school, the tears begin to flow which shows his distaste for the “pension” and his love for his mother whom he cannot bear to leave, but must.

**The Well Informed Little Dominique**

“Last, but not least, of these five different children is 8 year old Dominique. Poor little Dominique; always the center of attention, either because he has done something out of place or because of his cute little tales and remarks that he manages to think up. Our big little “Prince Domino.” Always demanding attention and service and getting it. At the age of 8 he can tell you any fact which happened in the history of “la belle France,” and can inform you who is the top tennis player from Austria or the United States. He is always asking me such questions that I even can’t answer about my own country! As the object of much attention and ridicule, he often can’t decide what to make of it, whether to laugh or cry – the latter usually. Madame has to keep an open eye and free hand at the dining table to keep his wandering mind straight, and in the proper order. If a misdemeanor, he gets a sharp slap and, amid loud, half-hearted wails, sent to the door and to his refuge of “la chamber.” Ten minutes later, the affair having passed over, he returns and is showered with cooing compliments while his mother ruffles his hair. He then proceeds to demand and receive in his irresistible manner.

**Marie the Domestique**

“Then there is Marie. Oh, Marie! A specimen of a typical (maybe not?) French provincial coming from the country and becoming a “domestique.” Round and fat as a butter ball, she serves the food which she can’t do at all. With dropping of forks and banging doors, one hesitates before asking for more. She has rosy-round cheeks and not many teeth so to comprehend her French becomes quite a feat! Such an individual one cannot forget – her jokes, her favors, her cooking and dress, leaves me with a unique image.

“And thus ends my rather poor commentary on such fine and interesting people . . . If only I had the ability to place them all individually before you so that you could enjoy them, too. Of course, Paris contains nothing but people, people from all walks of life; funny, sad, strange, pitiful, happy. One meets these individuals on any rue, the Champs-Elysees, in cafes, restaurants, Pigalle, Montmartre, the Opera, and even more so in the famous Metro.

**Diverting Types Found in the Metro**

Being a regular commuter every day in and out from the Latin Quarter, I have inevitably become vaguely familiar with the system and used to the unusual types one is apt to encounter while en route. After I adjusted myself to the French habit of staring “avec les yeux froids,” I began to enjoy watching the “show,” sometimes finding it embarrassing because I can’t control my laughter or silly sense of humor. While looking about me I often find that my neighbors have chosen either to stare or laugh back.”

**Education from All Angles**

Education – That is one sure thing. One gets it from all angles and loves every minute of it … well, practically. Naturally, the established center is the Sorbonne, a part of the vast Universite de Paris. As we walk to and from our courses in the old Latin Quarter, we participate in the fascinating world-wide traffic which continues night and day along the Boulevard St. Michel, where students and travelers from all corners of the world promenade – sometimes dressed in their native costumes, speaking their own strange languages or mingling with others and communicating in the beautiful language of French.

**The Hallowed Halls of the Sorbonne**

“Inside the well-worn hallowed halls of the Sorbonne where world-famous scholars once trod, I also, with a certain humility follow the morning courses offered for the “etrangers,” – Les Cours de la Civilization Francaise. The hour lectures are heard in a huge amphitheatre where the hundreds of students gather and sit on hard wooden benches. Differing from the American customs, the attention is focused toujours on the sometimes tempermental but brilliant professor who naturally speaks the native tongue of le francais. After the discours, the professeur is always greeted with enthusiastic applause – a custom, along with handshaking, which I approve of as a true sign of gentility.

**The Night Life**

“As for the night-life, I’m sure that it does exist; at least, I’ve heard tell. Really now, I have seen a bit of it, and to me, a country girl waddling around from New York, Paris holds its fascination. For the most part, save the American bars, the caves and boites (better known as dives) are truly rustic and have a charm unique to them alone. Any kind of entertainment called for on special nights may be found in the respective sections of the city. For me, I like Pigalle Montmartre, and the Latin Quarter with all of their thick, soupy atmosphere – that is, when I’m with a nice and strong, tactful date. No remarks intended towards the Lido, the Scherazade, Moulin Rouge, or such – but I’ll let you know when I get to attend such places. Naturally, and as it is publically known, the food in many of these places is excellent. The reason I know this is because there are some less expensive places with less fancies where I have gone, and I’m told they serve the same food.

**Ways to serve the Potatoes**

“As for the food at home, I have no complaints, especially since it’s already paid for, and maybe it’s because I’m always, never failing (unfortunately) hungry. (But that’s what I was sent over here for, wasn’t it – to be “broadened?”) At any rate, it still amazes me, the way the Frenchmen think up ways for serving potatoes! As for becoming a connoisseuse of all the special wines and vintages, I can at least tell if it’s “vin ordinaire” or not. It sort of gives me a funny feeling to find that little Dominique can drink his wine better than I can. – Disgusting!

“Paris is now in all of its magnificent glory under the deep blue shite-spotted Parisian sky . . . It’s wonderful! I wish I could and had the time and space to ramble on and on bout all of its thousands of assets and wonders.”

On completion of her studies in June, Miss Sheffield left for extensive travel on the continent. She resumes her studies at the Sorbonne in October.